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ABSTRACT

It is especially critical within reading programs during the years of middle childhood to identify and to nurture qualities of giftedness: open-mindedness, motivation, tolerance for uncertainty, preference for complexity, high regard for learning, sense of destiny, and the search for meaning. Supporting this view, the work of Frank Smith, Goodman, Hodges, Rudorf, Ruddell, and others has stressed the necessity of building new reading programs on the child's experience with language and his abilities to learn language. Further, Lamb and Henderson have noted that research in the psycholinguistic aspects of reading has indicated sufficient complexity in the development of language and thinking abilities in the young to suggest that the specific resources and materials needed for reading should be highly individualistic. Fader and Herndon provide case studies of the uses of "saturation", "individualized", and "experience-based" materials in highly diverse school settings which appear consistent with recommendations noted in the research cited and which foster growth in creative and gifted students and in many others as well. (Author/RD)

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"Fostering Reading in the Gifted and Creative: The Role of Creative Reading, Specific Materials and Resources: Intermediate"

by

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A Paper Presented to the

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"Fostering Reading in the Gifted and Creative:
The Role of Creative Reading, Specific Materials and Resources: Intermediate"

Robert E. Shafer
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In his newly revised Developmental Tasks in Education, Robert Havinghurst proposes that there is a period of life called Middle Childhood which ranges from about 6 to 12 years of age and is characterized by three great outward pushes. First he proposes that there is the thrust of the child out of the home and into the peer group, then the physical thrust into the world of games and work which requires the development of neuro-muscular skills, and third the mental thrust into the world of adult concepts, logic, symbolism, and communication.[1] Havinghurst further proposes that by the end of middle childhood the individual has worked out his particular style and his level in all three areas. Havinghurst pictures the beginning of this period as a period of great potential where within the child there are untold resources waiting to be realized through the unfolding powers of his body and mind and through the learning experiences he will have in the interaction with his society. In these terms Havinghurst proposes that the tasks are as follows:

1. Learning physical skills necessary for ordinary games.
2. Building wholesome attitudes toward one's self as a growing organism.
3. Learning to get along with age mates.
4. Learning an appropriate masculine or feminine role.
5. Developing fundamental skills in reading, writing and calculating.
6. Developing concepts necessary for everyday living.
7. Developing conscience, morality, and a scale of values.
8. Achieving personal independence.
9. Developing attitudes towards social groups and institutions.[2]

1. Havinghurst, Robert J., Developmental Tasks in Education (3rd ed.), David McKay and Co., Inc., New York, 1972, p. 19.
2. Ibid., pp. 19-35.

Almost all the developmental tasks mentioned above by Havinghurst are to a considerable extent related to reading instruction in the intermediate years although there is no time in this presentation to explore the many varieties of implications stemming from current research in human development which will undoubtedly ultimately affect reading instruction. We might more profitably deal here with the implications of this research for the development of specific skills necessary for independent and creative reading of gifted young people attempting to achieve these developmental tasks in the middle years. How can reading help them? We might look briefly at the middle childhood within the total area of human development as we consider the role reading is to play in it. Piaget has noted that with respect to the development of thought in the child, from the stage of egocentric and rather inaccurate thinking at the age of the beginning of school through the age of "concrete operations" in middle childhood and on to the beginning stage of "formal intellectual operations" from 12 to 14 years that the child passes through various phases of interaction with his environment including school. All of this interaction facilitates his development through a particular stage. Piaget further notes a logical development of thinking based on the experience provided by the same physical and social environment which can be affected by skillful teaching.[3]

With respect to the development of intellect, by the time a child is ready for school he already has several hundred concepts--mainly the simple ones learned in the home such as roundness, sweetness, redness, dog, food, anger, love, mother. He uses these concepts as the tools for thinking. Along with other aspects of intellectual, social, physical and moral development occurring in middle childhood the child forms several thousand concepts. If these concepts are true to reality, a good share of them grow out of his concrete experience. As he grows older he stores up concepts and becomes able to form new concepts on the bases of vicarious experiences afforded by reading, listening, or seeing films. For

3. Piaget, Jean, The Language and Thought of the Child, Leuchatel-Paris: Delachaux and Niestle, 1923, passim.

example, a considerable amount of research is recently being done of the development of number 7 of Havinghurst's developmental tasks, "developing conscience, morality, and a scale of values." Piaget, for example, proposes that at birth a child has no conscience, and no scale of principles. Values for him are food and warmth. As he learns values and is taught to distinguish between "good" and "bad", the basis for conscience is the parents' punishment combined with their acts of love and reward for the child and the child's love and dependence on them. Through the process of identification with parents or taking the role of the parents, the child develops within himself the warning and punishing voice of conscience. From this time on he carries with him a controlling force wherever he goes. Morality or a respect for rules and behavior is imposed upon the child first by the parent. Later, according to Piaget, the child learns the rules that are necessary and useful for playing games or carrying on any human cooperative enterprise. He therefore learns a "morality of cooperation or agreement" which is a true moral autonomy and necessary in a modern democratic society. Piaget believes that the middle years of childhood are crucial in the development of learning this "morality of cooperation." Development of morality and values implies development of the ability in an individual to choose between various objects and modes of action. The growing child must develop a scale of values that will enable him to make stable choices and hold himself to these choices. Piaget has proposed that the development of a scale of values by which a child makes choices proceeds very slowly in the years of middle childhood, but by the age of 12 the child is expected to be more stable in the sense of making a considered choice than he was as a young child seeking immediate satisfaction of every whim.[4]

Much work is being done on the development of moral education by Lawrence Kohlberg of Harvard University, who has developed a theory and a program for

4. Piaget, Jean, The Moral Judgment of the Child, Harcourt Brace and World, Inc., 1932, p. 55.

describing stages of moral development somewhat akin to the kinds of stages which Piaget proposed for all aspects of human development. Kohlberg describes moral development as taking place through three levels which he calls "preconventional, conventional and autonomous or principled."[5] Kohlberg proposes that progression through these levels depends on experience and on formal education. The specific implications concern the ways in which the culture teaches the child through the family and peer group, and other social pressures, as well as those within the school, by such means as punishments and rewards, examples by teachers and culture heroes and other similar influences. Kohlberg proposes that teachers present moral problems and dilemmas for students to encourage and help them to think effectively about moral problems, suggesting higher moral judgment will result and the student will develop a solid concept that will support him at the level of autonomous and principled moral behavior. Maslow, Rogers and other students of human behavior and human development have made similar proposals but the implications for reading instruction and the impact of reading on the achievement of personal independence and the development of conscience and morality as well as the impact of reading on other developmental tasks have been only randomly studied. It seems clear that we need much more longitudinal research of the type done by Walter Loban if we are to understand the ways in which individuals pass through various stages since each individual passes through the various stages in terms of his own language, culture and experience, developing a self-concept and a personality. We know that growth and maturation are continuous processes that go on throughout life. There are periods of time in the development of the individual when the growth is more dramatic and the manifestations of rapid change are more obvious. The years of growth encompassed by the public schools are without question the most dramatic during this period of middle childhood which takes place during intermediate and junior high school years. Grades 6, 7, 8 and 9 are, almost without exception, the

5. Kohlberg, Lawrence, and Turiel, Elliot, "Moral Development and Moral Education," in Psychology and Educational Practice (ed. Gerald Lesser), Scott Foresman and Co., Chicago, 1971, passim.

grades in which boys and girls are doing some of the most important growing of their lives. The period of pre-adolescence and adolescence have too often been thought of as merely the transition from childhood to adulthood--a period in which little of importance happens. It may be, as Kohlberg, Piaget and others have proposed, that growth in all areas of development, physical, social, emotional, mental and moral, is so rapid during these years that unique individual problems of growth will be more likely to arise. The values, attitudes and beliefs that young people form during these years are likely to be life-long and will in large measure determine success or satisfaction. They may determine what the individual will give to or take from life. Therefore the junior high and the intermediate school have unique functions because they must provide for boys and girls who have unique individual problems. Reading can and should play a vital part in this growth.

The reading program must fulfill individual growth functions if it is to provide the kind of experience that will stimulate the individual growth stages. As we have seen in the Parkway Project in Philadelphia and in other alternative schools, a new curriculum is being formed which will include both experiences which will stimulate students both in school and out. This is becoming a school curriculum in which parents are increasingly involved in the life of the school and in which both the students and teachers are increasingly involved in the life of the community outside of the school. McLuhan's concept of a "classroom without walls" is coming true in many communities. What does this mean for reading? Which specific reading materials and resources in the intermediate schools do we need to stimulate the growth and development of pre-adolescent boys and girls? Many gifted young people especially strive to achieve the developmental tasks of middle childhood and pre-adolescence noted above by Havinghurst.

We need to place a premium upon the development of gifted and creative young people in our society. Although we are becoming more skillful in identifying gifted students, we are still falling far short in applying what we know about them to the development of school programs. Despite the warnings by Philip Jackson and Jacob Goetzels, we still rely much too heavily upon the use of intelligence and achievement testing for the identification of creativity and giftedness so that the specific strength and talents of many of our most talented children go unrecognized at school. Many times these children stand out as being superior students but we seldom know how superior and in what ways. This is unfortunate if there is truth in the theory held by some that to be really "clever" in the sense that our British colleagues apply the term in education, one has to begin young. Alfred North Whitehead called it a need for "initial momentum." Tutoring took care of John Stuart Mill in this situation--he was taught Greek at the age of three. Michaelangelo, over his father's objection that such work was for artisans, spent his days as a sculptor's apprentice at the age of 13 and by 15 shared the company of Lorenzo the Magnificent and his guests, the most able minds in Europe. Perhaps with our direction toward alternative schools and "classrooms without walls," we will soon be able to "apprentice" some of our most gifted young people to engineers, artists, physicists and other in our community, which might do a great deal to provide the specific resources in reading that they would need to pursue their special gifts. Malcolm X in his autobiography points out the development of his own individualized reading program done in prison, ranging back and forth through classic and contemporary works in the prison library in an effort to find the answer to the dilemma of racial relationships in our country. Unfortunately in most schools we have as yet in many cases continued to keep our gifted youngsters studying what they already know and marking time in basic readers in the elementary schools and in "required" reading courses in English, Social Studies, and other secondary school programs. Sometimes when they themselves

reach for the knowledge they need, they are told to wait, that that knowledge will be forthcoming in another book or perhaps in another school.

Perhaps more than ever before in the schools, as we face an age of "accountability," we are busy in the application of systems approaches to education and we are being forced to use state-wide test scores and commercial test scores to identify student performance along with the achievement measures and teachers' judgments and grades as the criteria with which to identify giftedness and creativity. We need more exploration of the known intellectual facets of giftedness such as open-mindedness, motivation, tolerance of uncertainty, preference for complexity, high regard for learning, and a sense of destiny. Such criteria are imbedded throughout Havinghurst's developmental tasks and demonstrate themselves in classrooms through manifestations of originality, spontaneity and flexibility as well as the individual's attempts to search for meaning in various situations and to make meanings for himself. This idea of a search for meaning which is so crucial to the development of gifted and creative children during middle childhood has also become within the past several years an important idea in what Frank Smith, Ken Goodman and others have called the psycholinguistic analysis of reading and learning to read. Although the work of psycholinguists and reading specialists working with them has become well-known, it is perhaps wise to summarize their definition of reading which may indicate the kinds of programs and resources we need in schools if we are to develop the abilities of those who are already gifted and further develop more creative readers throughout our population.

In his essay, "Behind the Eye: What Happens in Reading," Kenneth S. Goodman gives us the definition of reading which well may serve this purpose:

- o Reading begins with graphic language in some form: print, script, etc.
- o The purpose of reading is the reconstruction of meaning. Meaning is not in print, but is meaning that the author begins with when he writes. Somehow the reader strives to reconstruct this meaning as he reads.
- o In alphabetic writing systems there is a direct relationship between oral language and written language.
- o Visual perception must be involved in reading.
- o Nothing intrinsic in the writing system or its symbols has meaning. There is nothing in the shape or sequence of any letters or grouping of letters which in itself is meaning.
- o Meaning is in the mind of the writer and the mind of the reader.
- o Yet readers are capable through reading of reconstructing a message which agrees with the writer's intended message.

...Reading is a complex process by which a reader reconstructs, to some degree, a message encoded by a writer in graphic language.[6]

We have already seen that for the gifted student this search for meaning is an even more pressing characteristic of his development than with other children. If one looks only at the development of reading skill, we can say that by the time that most of the students we would classify as gifted have reached the intermediate school or junior high, perhaps half of them have found the process of reading to be interesting or rewarding. Many of these children have already learned to read before they enter the first grade. Many have mastered the encoding/decoding process and are able to read at a level where they can use reading either to gain knowledge or for pleasure, even perhaps by the age of eight or nine. Nevertheless, a large proportion of children have not been stimulated by their elementary school reading programs, and as we know from the controversies over "individualized reading" and "sequential reading" which were waged during the 1950's, many gifted children were found, in studies by Jeanette Veatch and others, to be "completely turned off" by the basic reading program and responded much more positively to individualized programs, wherein they were able to develop a continuing interest in reading, as well as the skills necessary to use reading for an

6. Goodman, Kenneth S., "Behind the Eye: What Happens in Reading," in Reading: Process and Program (with Olive S. Niles), Commission on the English Curriculum, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Illinois, 1970, p. 5.

extension of their own knowledge and for the achievement of various developmental tasks. In his book Understanding Reading: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of Reading and Learning to Read, Frank Smith distinguishes between the learning of various decoding skills which he proposes can be learned in a variety of ways. He notes that these decoding skills will be of very little use to the reader once he develops what Smith calls fluent reading. It is this development of fluent reading in the gifted child and in all children which we need to give our highest priority in our new reading program. As Smith proposes, we need to look carefully at our target before we develop programs and resources. Smith suggests that our target is the development of a child's innate quality as an information processor:

> Man is a creature who devours information. He spends much of his waking time selecting and acquiring information--and a good part of the time he is asleep organizing it.
>
> Man uses all his sensory systems for acquiring information which he integrates and stores in his brain. In the brain, man constructs a model of the world. The model is a summary of all his past experiences and a basis for all his future activity. In fact, it is not possible to separate the past from the future in either the brain or behavior, because in both the ongoing activity reflects past experience and future expectations.
>
> Man's appetite for information can be regarded as a constant search for regularities in external events--regularities that both explain the past and predict the future. The regularities economize on mental effort because they summarize experience and minimize the necessity to remember a multitude of individual events; they provide the basis for rules for deciding when two events should be regarded as being similar or different. Every discovery of a regularity of application of a rule is an instance of uncertainty reduction. As we shall see, the construction of rules for allocating events to a particular category is an important aspect of learning to read.[7]

Smith goes on to point out that the implications of the work of linguists, psycholinguists, and reading specialists who have attempted to study the relationship between language and reading have come to focus on the regularities

7. Smith, Frank, Understanding Reading: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of Reading and Learning to Read, Holt Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1971, p. 28.

of language and how a knowledge of them is developed by the child. Essentially, they see reading as an aspect of language, only superficially different from the comprehension of speech, because many of the skills employed by a child in learning the regularities of spoken language may also be employed to learn reading. The basic process, however, is the same. The child attempts to reduce uncertainty and to discover regularity. Smith maintains:

> The point of view just expressed is so different from the way we usually view language perception that it will take a little adjusting to. But we are going to be very deeply involved in the view that reading is not a matter of going from words to meaning, but rather from meanings to words. To read words effectively, you need to have a good idea in advance of what it is that you are reading. This is not as paradoxical as it might seem; broadcasters, for example, like to glance through bulletins before they read them because they know it is much easier to enunciate the words appropriately with prior knowledge of the meaning. The question of what meaning actually is, or what comprehension can be, will be approached and then evaded... before considering how the receiver might get from raw sound or print to meaning, a function that we have already attributed to grammar.[8]

This concern for turning reading instruction around so that we start essentially with the individual and his ability to make meanings, rather than with a basic reader in interaction with his environment, is leading us not only to alternatives in the organization of schools and school curriculum, but most certainly in reading programs. What are its implications?

In their new book, Language and Learning to Read: What Teachers Should Know About Language, Richard Hodges and Hugh Rudorf, in Chapter 7, "Language and Meaning," and Chapter 8, "Language and Thinking," give us the beginning of an answer. Since the book is readily available, I will only indicate here that they quote the communication model of Project Delta developed by Professor Robert Ruddell and Mrs. Helen Bacon of the University of California at Berkeley, which encompasses reading, listening, speaking and writing, and focuses on the processes employed by readers and listeners in comprehending oral and written messages: decoding strategies, meaning strategies, and interpretation abilities.

8. Ibid., pp. 34-35.

Ruddell and Bacon pay particular attention to the interpretation aspects of the communication model, since they propose that it is by interpretation as a process that the reader (or listener) derives meaning from communication. This process of the derivation of meaning is, they assert, a function of experience, memory, and the skills involved in critical and creative thinking.[9] Further support is given to this view by Professor Pose Lamb of Purdue University. Taking into account the work of Goodman, Smith and other linguists and psycholinguists working on the relationship between language and reading, she notes that we should be extremely careful in applying such evidence to the development of specific materials and resources for instruction, without duly taking into account the consequences for children. Further evidence for caution is supplied by Constance McCullough in her paper "What Should the Reading Teacher Know About Language and Thinking?" and by Edmund H. Henderson in his paper "Linguistics, Thought and Reading."[10] In his paper Henderson describes an incident which occurred in a demonstration reading lesson as follows:

> Thirteen or fourteen years ago, I think it was in the spring of 1957, Russell Stauffer taught a demonstration reading lesson with first grade children before a large audience at the University of Pittsburgh. The story was about children who were looking for a penny they had lost while playing in the park. Stopping the readers at this point in the story, Stauffer asked, "How do you think it will end?" All but one child, a boy, agreed that the penny would be found. Then they read to test their prediction. When all were finished, a girl spoke first, "We were right," she said. "They found the penny."
>
> At once the boy who had challenged the prediction in the first place asked for the microphone and replied, "How do you know it was the same penny?"
>
> "No. We were right," said the girl, "and I can prove it." She turned to the last page of the story and read aloud, "They found the penny." Then she added, "if it had been just any penny, it would have said a penny."

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9. Ruddell, Robert B. and Bacon, Helen G., "The Nature of Reading: Language and Meaning," in Language and Learning to Read: What Teachers Should Know About Language (eds. Richard E. Hodges and E. Hugh Rudorf), Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1972, pp. 169-188.
10. Hodges and Rudorf, op.cit. (Lamb, pp. 189-199; McCullough, pp. 202-215; Henderson, pp. 216-223.)

Henderson concludes from this incident that the interplay between language and thinking which exists in the reading process, even in the reading of young children, is so infinitely complex and individualistic that any proposals for resources and materials not developed for specific individuals are simply irrelevant in school reading programs. Particularly with gifted children, if we can see this incident multiply itself in depth and complexity in the middle years, we can also see the necessity for resources and materials which develop prediction, hypothesis testing and substantiation judgment in both younger and older children.

We are then presented with a great dilemma in the development of specific materials and resources. If children make up their own meanings, and as Smith points out, go from meaning to language rather than language to meaning in learning to read, is it not necessary to provide them with situations both in school and out which will allow them to develop their own meanings in an individually stimulated atmosphere, at least for a part of the school day? Is it not also essential that such development be centered more on the individual's personal interests as best we can find out about them than we have ever had it centered before? Without attempting to be definitive in answering these questions, since I would propose that they merit a great deal more research attention than they have received, I would cite the recent work of Olive Niles in looking at instructional materials for reading as helping us to hypothesize viable answers. In her comments about instructional materials for reading, she notes important connections between materials and teachers:

> Many teachers will indicate that they could do a much better job of implementing a reading program if they had better materials. Probably they attach too much importance to materials--good teachers can and often have taught children to read well with very poor materials, even with materials far too difficult for the children. The sine qua non is the teacher, not the book.
>
> However, good materials make it easier for the good teacher to do what could be done with poorer materials; improvements increase the mileage teachers get from equal expenditures of time and energy.

> There are three major categories of materials to be considered: (1) materials intended specifically for the teaching of reading, (2) library materials, and (3) content area materials. There have never been so many new materials in each of these categories as have flowed from the publishers in the last two or three years. Two major developments have changed the complexion of many of these materials. The first is the strong emphasis on relevance for today's children and youth. Many teachers feel that difficulty of materials, to which so much attention has been paid in the past, is less important than this relevance. In fact, some feel the lack of relevance may be a major cause of the difficulty. The second trend is toward a multi-media approach.
>
> Relevance is very difficult, if not impossible, to define briefly. We usually think of it as related to interests: a story, for example, is relevant to a group of students if it deals with situations or ideas which they perceive as meaningful and important to them. However, in another sense, materials are relevant if they are expressed in a language which coincides with the language which is familiar to the readers. There has been much discussion of late of the irrelevance, in this sense, of the language of many basal readers. The rationale for the use of the experience approach to early reading depends in part on this matter of relevance of language. Good experience charts are expressed in the actual dialect of the pupils who create and use them.[11]

If we consider the word "relevance" as Olive Niles has considered it, with special concern for the development of gifted and creative readers, we need to consider "relevance" also in terms of development. If a child is stimulated by relevant materials throughout the years of middle childhood, he may well accomplish all of Havinghurst's developmental tasks to a considerable extent and also pass through the various stages of growth noted by Piaget and others. He may come to be the kind of reader that I once observed as a commuter, moving each day from a suburban community by commuter train to Grand Central Station in New York City. Each morning I would leave at approximately 7:30 a.m., boarding the train with a group of fellow commuters, (mostly males--and mostly carrying briefcases also), all headed to one sort of job or another in the center of New York City. My job at the time was at least partially in the field of reading research and also in the development of instructional materials for gifted and creative readers. This was 1963, and we were then at work on the early stages of the Success in Reading series.[12] I began to notice that most of

11. Niles, Olive S., "School Programs: The Necessary Conditions," in Reading: Process and Program, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

12. Shafer, Robert E., MacDonald, Arthur, Hess, Karen M., Schantz, Maria and Simmons, John S., Success in Reading, Vol. 1-6, Silver Burdett Co., General Learning Corp., Morristown, New Jersey, 1967, passim.

my fellow commuters exhibited a number of characteristics of "mature readers" as described by Gray and Rogers in their classic study, Maturity in Reading. Their reading approach suited their purpose, and the material used was relevant to their purpose. They were usually reading either the New York Herald Tribune or the New York Times or the Wall Street Journal. Their reading patterns were relevant to their developmental tasks. For example, in the case of the Wall Street Journal, they would open the paper to the stock market quotations from the previous day, scan until they found the stock they were interested in and read carefully the opening and closing quotations for the previous day. They would then scan for any stories about stocks that they were interested in on other pages of the paper and do a very careful reading of these stories. They would skim other articles of interest in the paper, and at exactly the time the train reached Grand Central Station at 8:10 they would have done the complete reading job relevant to their purpose. Similar observations were made of readers reading the New York Times and the then extant New York Herald Tribune. Morning after morning throughout the years of 1962 to 1965, I observed their reading patterns carefully. Similar observations can undoubtedly still be made. Olive Niles might note that "relevance" for these particular gifted and creative readers existed in three newspapers.

What about the case for specific resources for younger children in the middle years of the intermediate school and the junior high? I would recommend as a beginning two examples: One is that of the experience of Daniel Fader described in Hooked on Books and more recently The Naked Children. In Hooked on Books, Fader asks himself:

> But what happens when the materials used in classes for the general student are selected to meet the practical needs of the student rather than the more abstract needs of the subject? In English, for example, rhetoric takes precedence over grammar, and utility becomes more important than beauty. When such criteria become the new basis for selection of materials, a radical change is inevitable. For example, such extremes of the same language as Shakespeare and the daily newspaper are found to have much in common. In terms of the practical needs of the student, the newspaper takes precedence. Because it begins more nearly where he is, it may prove to be the bridge across

> which he crawls, stumbles and finally walks, erect, to where he should be. If he finds Shakespeare at the other end of the bridge, then the simple, inelegant newspaper, magazine or paperback book has become a legitimate and necessary means to attaining a complex, eloquent end.
>
> When the goal of the English class is redefined in terms of rhetorical ease and willing expression, the ancient methods of the schools become as irrelevant to the subject as they have generally been to the student. Ease in understanding newspapers and pleasure in reading magazines cause both to replace the grammar texts and workbooks of time-dishonored usage. Instead of a student who spells according to rules, we may now have a student who spells by the image of words which have a hundred time impinged on his reading consciousness.
>
> Because the reasons seem as compelling as those for asking teachers in every classroom to teach English, the second part of this program is based on the principle of SATURATION, meaning the replacement, whenever possible and in whatever classroom, of customary texts and workbooks with newspapers, magazines and paperbound books. The object of this is to stir the sensibility of the practical child. Even as he learns to be reticent in a world of words he cannot fathom, so may he learn to be receptive in a world of words he can understand. Because he finds newspapers, magazines and paperbound books in every classroom, and because he can and will read them, he may yet be brought to compromise with a verbal world he cannot avoid.[13]

Undoubtedly everyone here knows the success story of the saturation approach in the Maxey School, and here in Detroit's Northwestern High School. But these were senior high school students, some might argue, and in some cases they were from socio-economic ethnic groups in a rural and an urban community where some would lack the stimulation of many books in the home, and someone in the home or the school who is interested in sharing those books.

But "saturation" and individualization worked here for Fader. Will it work elsewhere? More recently, in Chapter 13 of his new book, How to Survive in Your Native Land, James Herndon tells the story of how he and his two colleagues Eileen and Arpine decided to redo the reading program of their school in California. In this case, they were talking about the 7th and 8th grades. He calls this chapter "How Teachers Learn." He says it just this way:

13. Fader, Daniel and McNeil, Elton B., Hooked on Books, Berkley Publishing Co., New York, 1966, pp. 16-17.

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[The quotation--too lengthy to reproduce here with permission of the copyright holder--is Herndon's account of how he and his colleagues failed to interest their students in books and finally came to the realization that "we didn't know nothing."][14]

After attending a conference with Herb Kohl and others, the three decided to make a complete survey of what was known throughout the field of reading and then to attempt to apply the best that was known and said to their particular students in their school.

[Next, Herndon continues, impressed by Kohl's "revolutionary idea that teachers ought to know something about what they were doing," he and his colleagues "determined to try everything once and for all": testing, grouping, diagnosing, reading, consulting with specialists.][15]

Herndon and his two colleagues, Eileen and Arpine, noted a number of what they call "peculiar things" about the testing. They noticed that many of the students came out much lower on the individual oral test than they did on the school-wide test and they also noticed that many of the children who were already gfited and creative readers and who were reading books like Black, Like Me or Trevor-Roper's books about the Nazis or histories of World War II, were pegged by the tests as third or fourth grade level readers. They also noticed that the test was extremely vulnerable to the conscious or unconscious influence of the test-giver on the results; that if the test-giver's job or reputation depended on the improvement of the children, or if the test-giver wanted the children to improve, it was likely that they would improve on the test. There were other problems about the testing, all of which have been written about before. In any case, after a thorough review of current readings in methods and materials proposed for intermediate schools, Herndon and his colleagues came to the following conclusion:

15. Ibid., pp. 136-137.

14. Herndon, James, How to Survive in Your Native Land, Bantam Books, New York, 1971, pp. 134-135.

> Briefly, we just knew it was absurd that a normal O.K. American kid of any class or kind of twelve years old shouldn't be able to read. Why was it? Because reading is not difficult. Anyone can do it. It is an activity which no one seems to be able to explain but which everyone can do if given a chance. It is simple for people to do. If you know enough to tie your shoe and come in out of the rain, you can do it.
>
> If you can't do it, you must have been prevented from doing it. Most likely what prevented you was teaching. For one thing, if you have to get taught the same "skills" for seven years over and over again, you probably get the notion that it is very difficult indeed. But more important, the "skill" involved in reading is at once very simple and quite mysterious. Once you can look at C-A-T and get the notion that it is a clue to a certain sound, and moreover that very sound which you already know means that particular animal, then you can read, and that is certainly quite simple, even if the ability of humans to do this is opaque. What you probably need to do then is to read a lot and thereby get better at it, and very likely that's what you will do, again, if no one stops you. What stops you is people teaching you skills and calling those skills "reading," which they are not, and giving you no time to actually read in the school without interruption.[16]

So that Herndon and his two colleagues evaluated their testing and reading program considering that they were doing essentially what Smith and Goodman have proposed. They were going from print into meaning, instead of from meaning into print. As Herndon himself put it, "they were always practicing up to read, and the practice itself was so unnecessary, or so difficult, or so boring you were likely to figure that the task you were practicing for must combine those qualities and so reject it or be afraid of it." What specific materials and resources then did they decide upon, and what did they find that worked? Strangely enough, Herndon's description sounds very much like that of Fader's "saturation" reading program.

Herndon continues saying that the above method works for, as he calls them, his eight, hard-line non-achievers at Rabbit Mountain School as well as it does for the "regulars." He says it works in school terms according to standardized tests, it works in terms of the teacher's observations, and it works in terms of the parents' observations of the students, and to the students' own surprise, since "having battled themselves for so long about reading, they wanted it, when they came to face it, to be a more heroic task."

16. Ibid., pp. 140-141.

There is much more to Herndon's story of How to Survive in Your Native Land, but his case study of the teaching of reading in the Rabbit Mountain School may help us to come full circle through the studies of developmental tasks by Havinghurst, the work of the psycholinguists such as Goodman and Smith, to the specific resources and materials to develop fluent meaning in reading and ultimately to those qualities of giftedness such as open-mindedness, motivation, tolerance of uncertainty, preference for complexity, high regard for learning, and a sense of destiny, present in the creative individual in various dimensions of fluency, originality, spontaneity, and flexibility. If these are our goals, then we need to change our methods, and resources, in reading in the ways suggested above. If we are able to do this and to do it soon we may ensure that the years of middle childhood and adolescence are not merely physical processes, but that the social processes involved in Havinghurst's developmental tasks become what Edgar Z. Friedenberg called for more than a decade ago when describing the fundamental task of adolescence as defining "clear and stable self-identification." Friedenberg further pointed out that if we were able to develop a culture which helped each adolescent begin this definition, we would not be faced with the "pliability" of life in our society, and the "dangerous and troublesome prospect" that few youngsters really dare to go through adolescence, they merely undergo puberty and simulate maturity.[19] It is to the recreation of the fully human adolescent--the adolescent who faces life with love and defiance, then, that we need to dedicate our new reading programs and indeed our schools as well.

19. Friedenberg, Edgar Z., The Vanishing Adolescent, Beacon Press, Boston, 1959, p. 2.

ABSTRACT

"Fostering Reading in the Gifted and Creative:
The Role of Creative Reading, Specific Materials and Resources: Intermediate"

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Various students of human development such as Piaget and Kohlberg have noted that the child passes through various stages of growth in his physical, social, emotional and moral development. Havinghurst has further noted that within these stages the individual must learn "the various development tasks" of life. During the years of middle childhood, developmental tasks occur within three great outward pushes: 1) the thrust of the child out of the home and into the peer group; 2) the physical thrust into the world of games; and 3) the mental thrust into the world of adult concepts, logic, symbolism and communication. Although little is known concerning the precise impact of reading on an individual's development or on his achievement of developmental tasks, most authorities agree that the years of middle childhood are especially important and that the school and the reading program can play a vital role in facilitating development.

Identifying and nurturing the various qualities of giftedness during the years of middle childhood and the onset of adolescence is especially critical. Such cognitive and affective qualities of giftedness as open-mindedness, motivation, tolerance of uncertainty, preference for complexity, high regard for learning, developing a sense of destiny, and the search for meaning should be outcomes of school reading programs. Smith, Goodman, Hodges, Rudorf, Ruddell and others have noted the necessity of building new reading programs on the child's experience with language and his abilities to learn language. Lamb and Henderson have noted that research in the psycholinguistic aspects of reading has indicated sufficient complexity in the development of language and thinking abilities in the young to suggest that the specific resources and materials needed for reading should be highly individualistic. McCullough has demonstrated the variety of approaches and materials needed and Niles has stressed the need for relevance in developing them. Fader and Herndon provide case studies of the uses of "saturation," "individualized," and "experience-based" materials and resources in highly diverse school settings which appear consistent with recommendations noted in the research cited above and which foster growth in creative and gifted students and in many others as well.